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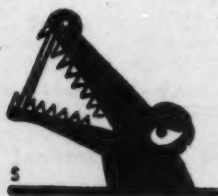
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Puppets in Czechoslovakia

Dr. Erik Kolar

Professor, Prague Academy of Arts

The puppet theatre is an immensely popular art among the Czech people. Nor is it any wonder. In few countries have puppets played such a significant role as among Czechs, and Czech puppeteers are justly proud of their three-hundred-year-old tradition. Long before the Czech people realized their dream of having a National Theatre, the puppet theatre was their national theatre.

The technical equipment of the present-day puppet theatres, however, is vastly different from the little "theatres" which served the first travelling puppeteers and their families. But their mission was the same then as it is today—to be the herald of progressive ideas and to give their audiences good entertainment. Their mission had particular significance in the second half of the 18th and the first half of the 19th century when Czech cultural life, suppressed by the Hapsburg monarchy, was re-awakened and began to show promise of a rich harvest. Folk puppeteers had no small share in sowing the seed of this cultural development. They travelled from village to village and through their agency the simple country people became acquainted with contemporary stage plays by native and foreign authors and with world classics. In the course of time, this repertoire was extended to include plays specially written for the puppet theatre. In the forties of last century, there were 79 puppeteer families on the road. That was a very fair number. Among those who consciously furthered the propagation of the Czech language and Czech culture was Matej Kopecký (1775—1847), whom the Czech people honour as one of the great figures in the movement of National Revival and

who, to this day, is looked upon by Czech puppeteers as their patron. Folk puppeteers, of course, adapted their repertoire to the needs of their theatres and recited their parts with their own curiously exaggerated pathos. But the cruel deeds of Don Juan and the punishment that overtook him, no doubt moved the audiences as powerfully as did the first performances in Prague of Mozart's "Don Juan" on the operatic stage. In Slovakia, somewhat later, the family of Jan Strazan played a similar role to that of the Czech puppeteer families in Bohemia.

The puppet theatre gradually came to be mainly a form of entertainment for children, but its popularity among the grown-ups did not decline. The reason was, no doubt, in part due to the fact that not even later was Czech culture truly encouraged under the Austrian regime. All the stronger then was the love with which it was fostered in families and by amateur theatrical societies. It was reflected, too, in the cultivation of that important offshoot of national culture — the puppet theatre. Its popularity was undoubtedly increased by the echo it found in the works of beloved national classics such as the composer Bedřich Smetana (1824—1884), who wrote two delightful overtures to puppet plays, the painter Mikoláš Aleš (1852—1913), who took particular pleasure in drawing puppets and puppet motifs, or the writer of historical tales and novels, Alois Jirasek (1851—1930), who dedicated his popular allegory "Mr. Johannes" to the puppet theatre. During the First World War, Josef Skupa (born 1892, now National Artist), helped, through his puppet performances, to strengthen the patri-

otic feelings of the Czech population of the West Bohemian town of Plzen. Skupa's puppets were, indeed, fighters in the national cause. The traditionally humorous puppet-clown, Kasperek, a member of the ancient family of Punch, Pulcinello and Hanswurst, was transformed in Skupa's interpretation into a figure whose satire and ridicule successfully helped to strengthen the resistance of Plzen audiences to the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. In acknowledgement of this role, and as an expression of their gratitude, the citizens of Plzen later set up a memorial plaque in honour of their Kasperek.

After the Great War, Josef Skupa founded the first and only professional puppet theatre in the new Czechoslovak Republic. He created two puppets which straight away became the favorites of children and grown-ups at home and came to be known all over Europe; the dull-witted but self-satisfied bourgeois, Spejbl, and his mischievous, precocious and cheeky little son, Hurvinek. During the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia, Skupa's puppets again went into action. Their satirical utterances proved offensive to the new aspirants for world domination and because these "supermen" were far from being as tolerant as the Roman Emperors who, while forbidding the impudent puppets to speak at least allowed them to act in dumb show, they imprisoned Spejbl and Hurvinek in one of the cabinets of the Plzen Gestapo and Josef Skupa in a Dresden prison, the latter escaping, as by a miracle, when it was burned to the ground in 1945.

Skupa's puppets, however, were not the only ones to strengthen the belief of their audiences during the Second World War in the liberation of Czechoslovakia. We would mention here, too, in passing, the performances of Resistance sketches by Dr. Jan Malik, which were secretly attended by hundreds of people from all over

Prague and the surrounding countryside.

The Nazis tried to strangle all national life and also all amateur puppet-theatre activity which had been developing so promisingly in pre-war Czechoslovakia. But after the war, the lost time was soon made up, and in present-day people's democratic Czechoslovakia, the puppet theatre is flourishing as never before. This is due, on the one hand, to the encouragement given by the State to the founding of professional puppet theatres in recognition of their importance as a means of education and, on the other, because the State fosters all forms of folk art and so also puppetry. While before the Second World War the law placed puppeteers on the same footing as the owners of shooting-booths and roundabouts, the Theatre Act (1948) put the puppet-theatre on an equality with all other forms of dramatic art. In Czechoslovakia, today, there are 10 professional puppet theatres, the majority of these being travelling theatres and two more will start performing in a short time. A particularly high artistic level is achieved by the Prague Central Puppet Theatre, by the Spejbl and Hurvinek Theatre, also in Prague, and by the Brno puppet theatre Radost. In 1952 the Central Puppet Theatre was awarded the title of State Prize Laureate for its staging of the Soviet play by K. Shneider "Heroes of the North." In 1953 it won first prize in the puppet-theatre division of the national dramatic festival, The Theatre Harvest, with a performance of the national fairy-tale "Goldilocks," dramatized by the poet Josef Kainar, State Prize Laureate. This theatre has performed so far only with puppets manipulated from below (rod-puppets) but is also adapting its technical equipment for puppets worked by strings from above (marionettes). The Spejbl and Hurvinek puppet-theatre performs mainly with marionettes and the Brno

Radost with all types of puppets—marionettes, rod-puppets and glove-puppets.

The professional theatres in Czechoslovakia enter their best performances for the annual dramatic contest—The Theatre Harvest. A similar review of the most successful performances of the amateur theatres also takes place every year at a Puppet Festival Week held in the East Bohemian town of Chrudim.

Proof of the importance attributed to the puppet theatre in Czechoslovakia is the distinction conferred on Josef Skupa for his work in this branch of dramatic art—the highest that the State can award an artist—the title of National Artist, while two other outstanding puppeteers, Dr. Jan Malik (born 1904), Art Director of the Central Puppet Theatre, and the stage-designer, Vojtech Cinybulk (b. 1915), were nominated State Prize Laureates. Puppeteers have also their own magazine, *The Czechoslovak Puppeteer*, which carries on a forty-year-old tradition in Czechoslovak puppeteer magazines.

The State cares for the systematic training of puppeteers. Special classes at three higher Industrial Arts Schools and one special class at the School of Arts and Crafts (with university status) give instruction in the artistic designing of puppets. In order that the general and professional knowledge of folk-art among puppeteers may be as soundly founded as possible, that they may develop their gifts to the full and make successful use of their art as a means of educating their audiences of both young and old, numerous courses are organised at district, regional and national levels. The highest possible qualification of professional puppeteers is ensured by the independent puppet-art department at the Dramatic Faculty of the Academy of Stage and Screen Arts. (The puppet-art department was opened in 1952.) Here puppeteers are given, above all, practical training.

Scientific work is also continued, for which the foundations were laid by the great propagator of puppets, Dr. Jindrich Vesely (1885—1938), co-founder and first President of the former UNIMA Union internationale des marionnettes), in his numerous theoretical works dealing with the history of Czech and world puppet art, with his reconstructions of old texts and his valuable work in the publishing field.

Czechoslovakia has always been the centre of international puppet-theatre activities. Before the First World War, among the many foreign puppet-theatres giving guest performances in this country was Podrecco's excellent Teatro dei Piccoli. After the war English puppeteers visited this country, while of far-reaching significance was the visit, in 1948, of People's Artist of the R.S.F.S.R. S. V. Obratsov, who acquainted Czechoslovak puppeteers with the system of puppets worked by rods, which has since rapidly gained ground in this country.

The strength and vitality of Czechoslovak puppet-art derives from its being deeply rooted in the people. It is truly an art of the masses. Registered with the Centre of Folk Arts and Crafts are close on 2,100 puppet theatres in Works Clubs, co-operatives and Cultural Centres. Actually, however, the number is much larger. Puppet theatres are to be found in families and creches, in nursery schools and school clubs. At the Young Pioneers' holiday camps children can be seen watching with shining eyes improvised puppet-shows, in the club-rooms of the Czechoslovak Union of Youth you will find boys and girls busy drawing, modelling, painting and sewing, so that on Sunday they may be able to entertain their younger friends with a puppet-show.

The puppet theatre is gaining in increasing measure the interest of grown-ups. In work-intervals, it can focus attention on a topical question or

provide a whole evening's entertainment with a classical play. But still the puppet-show remains chiefly a form of children's entertainment. Puppets are part of the life of Czech and Slovak children from their earliest years. Little animals or the children's favourite hero, Kasperek, for whom in present-day plays a Young Pioneer is sometimes substituted or a typical local figure, inculcate in them a love of order, truthfulness, discipline, politeness, comradeship and basic health rules and habits. In this latter field, Czechoslovak puppetry has an excellent tradition, thanks to the plays by Karel Driml (1891—1929), some of which are even known to children of other nations. Puppet-shows are among the first artistic experiences of Czechoslovak children and are instrumental in bringing them up to love and appreciate art and in refining their taste. Puppets make them familiar with the immense treasure of poetry in national fairy-tales and ballads and with the whole progressive repertoire of Czech and foreign puppetry literature. And puppets, too, can tell children, in poetic form and in a language which they can understand, of their parents' endeavour to make their country lovelier and more prosperous, of the importance of human work or of how people of good will all over the world long to live in peace and friendship.

Deeply rooted in the Czechoslovak puppet tradition is also the Czechoslovak puppet film which, from its modest pre-war beginnings, has developed tremendously since 1945 and has gained numerous awards and Honourable Mentions at international film festivals. In few countries is puppet-film production on so large a scale and at such a high level of artistic maturity as that attained by the Czechoslovak State Film. Nor is it a mere coincidence that one of its foremost creators is a pupil of Josef Skupa—Jiri Trnka (b. 1912), who is at the

head of the Prague Puppet Film Studio. The full-length film "The Czech Year," based on national customs, legends, dances and songs; "The Emperor's Nightingale," an adaptation of an Andersen motif; a screen-version of the Czech fairy-tale "Bayaya," a film parody of the Wild West romances entitled "Aria of the Prairie;" "The Story of a Double Bass," dramatized for a puppet film and full of delicate Chekhov humour, and "Old Czech Legends," which won prizes and was favourably received at the film festivals in Venice, Locarno, Cannes, Marianske Lazne and Knokke-le-Zoute; all these films document the versatility and rich inventive imagination of this mature artist.

In the industrial town of Gottwaldov there are two groups of puppet-film workers: one is led by State Prize Laureate Hermína Tyrlova (b. 1900), and the other by Karel Zeman (b. 1909). Tyrlova worked in this branch of film production long before World War II, but at that time she had to confine herself to film advertisement. Special interest was aroused both at home and abroad by her post-war film "The Revolt of the Toys," which combined living actors and puppets and reacted to events which took place during the Nazi occupation. Her greatest success was her film for the smallest film-goers—"Misfit Doll"—for which she was awarded the title of State Prize Laureate. Loved alike by children and grown-ups are her earlier films "Lullaby" and the tale "Nine Chickens." One of Hermína Tyrlova's latest productions is a fairy-tale by State Prize Laureate Jiri Marek, "Tale of a Dragon."

Karel Zeman, who produced his first combined puppet and acted film "Christmas Dream" in 1945, soon won great popularity with his comic puppet figure, Mr. Prokouk, the central character of a series of satirical films dealing with topical problems. Notable, too, are "Inspiration," in which he

employed specially designed figures of blown glass, and "King Lavra," based on a version of the King Midas motif by the Czech classical writer, Karel Havlicek Borovsky. New technical means combining the puppet and the animated cartoon film were successfully employed by Karel Zeman in the artistically daring film "Treasure of Bird Island." The most recent of his films reconstructs the Earth's pre-history and acquaints the youthful film-goers with its long extinct fauna and flora in the course of the adventures of four school-boys, whose parts are played by living actors, while the

pre-historic animals are represented by puppets constructed in accordance with the latest results of scientific research.

The Czechoslovak puppet theatre, which has its old tradition, and the Czechoslovak puppet film, which is now building up a tradition, have a common aim—to be a pleasure-giving and effective means of helping to educate both children and grown-ups, and of making life happier and people more receptive for truth and for all that is noble and beautiful in human endeavour.

Die Hohnsteiner Puppenspiele

Hans F. Waecker

Introducing: Die Hohnsteiner Puppenspiele.

"The "Hohnsteiner Puppenspiele" are coming to town" — this is exciting news, not only in Germany, their native country, but also in many other European countries.

And indeed, when the "Hohnsteiner" are coming, you're in for a great treat. Young and old, rich and poor never get tired of watching Kasper, the hero in all the plays, when he, in his unpredictable ways, adds life, color and suspense to the show. Kasper is a wise little fellow, without being a wise guy. I don't think there is a person in the whole wide world who couldn't learn from Kasper. And yet, Kasper isn't a teacher, a preacher or an educator. Not in the common sense of the word. I believe that's why he is so very popular.

Now, Kasper is not a Hohnsteiner "invention." He is a blood relation to Mr. Punch, Polichinelle or Punchinello. But what the Hohnsteiner have made out of him that is the key to his never ending popularity.

It took a master like Max Jacob to revive the age-old hand puppet play and give it a style that is internationally recognized for its artistic value.

At the Paris' World Fair in 1937 a Gold Medal was awarded to the Hohnsteiner. But they have played not only in Paris. They perform all over Europe and, believe it or not, even though the performances are in German, they are an immediate success which call for repeat performances over and over again. The medium of film is not a new one to the Hohnsteiner. Since 1936 more than thirty gay puppet movies have been made for young and old and in 1949 a specially artistic puppet film for adults was produced.

At a time when puppeteers in Europe are not among those people who live a carefree life, finance-wise, the "Hohnsteiner" travel all over the continent with their three groups — directed by Max Jacob and enjoyed by big and little.

The Hohnsteiner recently conducted a particularly interesting and gratifying experiment. They joined forces with the troupe of the very talented young French puppeteer Jean-Loup Temporal of Paris. With joint efforts they produced an all adult play "The Emperor's New Clothes" after Andersen's story.

The success was terrific, both in

France and in Germany, and I wish I had the necessary space to give you the reports of the press of the two countries.

What is so different about the Hohnsteiner, what makes their play so outstanding? What are the reasons for their seemingly effortless performances? Apart from those intangible things which cannot be put into words, it's their extraordinary perfection which, I think, can hardly be outperformed.

You should have an opportunity to

see the Hohnsteiner. You would enjoy them, even if they would not perform in English. You would understand their play and wouldn't realize that you can't understand the language. It would be wonderful to have the Hohnsteiner come to our festival next summer, even though I realize that this would probably be quite a difficult undertaking. However — if any of you puppeteers make a Europe trip — don't fail to drop in on the Hohnsteiner in Hamburg, Germany. It will be well worth while.

The Turnabout Moves

**Last Performance at Unique Playhouse
to be March 31; Declining**

Business Blamed

By Cecil Smith

(Courtesy of the L. A. Times)

Turnabout Theater, a Los Angeles institution for nearly 15 years, is packing up its puppets and people and moving to San Francisco.

The last performance at the unique little twin-staged playhouse at 716 N La Cienega Blvd. was given March 31.

To many a playgoing Angeleno, this is a saddening surprise. Turnabout, only permanent puppet theater in America, was considered as much a part of Los Angeles as the La Brea pits or the MGM lion.

Comfort to Enemy

And for it to move to San Francisco comes definitely under the heading of giving aid and comfort to the enemy.

The reason for the move is obvious. Turnabout, which was a turnaway theater for more than a decade, playing to capacity audiences nightly and sometimes booked up for weeks in advance, has had tough sledding lately.

Patrons of its intimate brand of musical entertainment have become fewer and fewer in the last three years.

"I don't know why," says Forman

Brown. "It's easy to blame television and traffic and lack of public transportation. We blame them for everything these days."

Played Town Out

"Maybe we've just played the town out," says Harry Burnett gloomily.

Brown and Burnett are two of the three partners who, under the title of the Yale Puppeteers, are the heart of Turnabout — its founders, owners and operators. Brown composes the music, writes the lyrics and lines, and, at his piano, plays accompaniment for both the puppet show and the live show and acts as master of ceremonies. He also sells the tickets.

Burnett is the master puppeteer, creator of the more than 800 marionettes used in the theater's repertoire of eight puppet musicals, who doubles as the chief comic in the live show. He also collects tickets.

General Manager

The third member of the trio is Richard Brandon, general manager of the theater. The three have been working with puppets together for 30

years now, since Burnett and Brown first became interested in the little wooden actors while they were students at the University of Michigan.

They moved to Yale and were joined by Brandon and began doing puppet shows on the college and resort circuits. Then they opened their first Los Angeles puppet theater on Olvera St. in 1929. It was known as Teatro Torito — the Theater of the Little Bull.

After two years, they took their puppets east again, touring and operating a New York theater. They returned in 1934 to make puppet movies for the old Fox studio and then crossed the country again to be part of a New York revue, "Sunday Nights at 9," which boasted such live performers as Shirley Booth and Van Heflin.

Birth of Idea

"That gave us the idea for Turnabout," says Brown. "A theater with both a puppet and a live revue. We talked it out on the train and decided we had to have two stages, one at each end of the theater.

"Then we started worrying about how to turn the audience from one stage to the other. When we got here, we found the Pacific Electric was dismantling some of its old cars. So we bought the seats and solved the problem."

The Yale Puppeteers were joined by Singer Dorothy Neumann and installed their ex-streetcar seats and opened the Turnabout July 10, 1941. From the start, the unique theater was a smashing success. Audiences filled the 172 seats of the theater nightly.

Gay Shows Popular

They liked the gay puppet shows, beginning always with a brief chamber music concert by the three temperamental members of the Haydn Trio. They liked coffee in the patio between acts and the return to find their seats reversed and the live revue on the second stage.

The people portion of the Turnabout show has starred many a celebrated performer, most notably Else Lanchester, who dropped in for a guest appearance one night and stayed 12 years. She was paid in material — Brown wrote some 55 songs for her.

Gilda Gray, Virginia O'Brien, the Duncan Sisters, Lotte Goslar, Marais and Miranda — many others were seen on the little stage during the years.

Accompany Show

Three performers of the current revue will go with the show to its new San Francisco home—the magnificent-voiced Odetta, who was discovered by Burnett and has scored night club successes and is featured in "Cinerama Holiday;" Inesita, famed Spanish dancer, and Frances Osborne, who has decorated the Turnabout stage off and on since its inception.

For the last performance March 31, many of the top names who have appeared at the Turnabout are to drop in for a final turn — for nostalgia's sake!

Also, the theater expects to see again many of the famous personalities who have been Turnabout patrons. Hundreds have autographed the walls of the theater. Names like Groucho Marx, Mary Martin, Marian Anderson, Burno Walter, Emil Ludwig, Charley McCarthy, Liberace and Thomas Mann are scrawled on the plaster.

Roster of Regulars

There's also a Turnabout roster of regulars who have been to the theater more than 10 times and who carry a special key to a sugar box in the ante room. More than 500 persons throughout the nation are 10-timers and have these keys.

The new Turnabout will open in a theater at Polk and Turk Sts. in San Francisco May 15, under sponsorship of the Town Hall organization of that city. The new theater is much larger — it will seat 540, again in reversible ex-streetcar seats.

A Team of Trotters

Herb Scheffel

This is all in response to the query in the November-December, 1955 issue of the PJ, as to "Who are the Trotter Brothers — are they Canadians?"

Though the Trotter Brothers have shown their night club-theatre act extensively through the provinces of Canada, they are jes' two nice, plain, ole Missourians, who have the smartness, the cleverness and chic in their work, that New York's elegant boites import from everywhere else, other than New York City. Could be, that outsiders have a better notion of what the smart Eastside set **SHOULD** be seeing and hearing in the "upholstered sewers."

Anyway — these two kids hail from Kansas City, Mo., and are just killing 'em at the Blue Angel (8th week at time of writing) where a novelty act never remains that long. Their forte, evident in a lot of their numbers, is to combine (ridiculously) humans with timber thespians in pantomime and lines. Most of the Trotter numbers are stamped with a thread of "plot," ending with a laugh finale — and when geared at a night club or supper club crowd, sometimes take on a slightly wicked sheen. For example, theirs is the first strip teaser that employs a real live "sugar daddy" (complete with gifts of bouquets, diamond bracelets and white fur jackets) and the "plot" idea takes it out of the mediocre "take it off" routine.

Dave Trotter was a protege of Bob Longfield, and served as "Andre Vern's" assistant in his act for two years. After the two year apprenticeship (1947-48) he went out on his own and did a single for a while, playing club dates of all sorts, theatres and night clubs through the midwest.

It was this experience and time

where ideas, and showmanship and stage presence rubbed off on him. There is nothing like performing, performing, performing to gain polish. After a stretch in the army (of course the puppets traveled with him) David naturally returned to his marionette act and rebuilt a solo act comprising the usual set of figures found in every variety acts repertoire, from break-away skeleton to pianist.

Booking and playing the act alone through the midwest, he was anxious to enlarge the presentation and command a higher salary. This required an additional manipulator and jack of all trades. There is nothing like keeping it in the family, and before long, Bob Trotter, with a keen business sense, "jernerd out." They enlarged, rebuilt, reroutined the act, with two sets of hands in the pie, so that it was possible to do more elaborate and productionlike things.

The brothers broke in the double act in Montreal, Canada, and after working in that territory a while, drove out to play the west coast of the states. Miami, the West Indies, San Juan, Jamaica and Cuba followed. Back to Toronto, Canada, at the Casino Theatre, they were caught by the Ed Sullivan Show talent buyer — Mark Leddy — and two months later they were ensconced in the plushy Blue Angel on 55th Street.

Dave extolls the benefits of a two-operator team. Outside the standard tandem control bits, more than one marionette can be on stage at a time. Props, set unit pieces can be used to heighten a number's atmosphere, tape recorded effects can be controlled, and the maneuvering puppeteer, virtually an octopus, has four hands instead of two to utilize during a show. It was a pushover to lead them into the

humans-puppets routines, and ideas and plots for such production numbers are constantly opening up.

Bob handles all business transactions, develops all advertising matter, designs ideas for brochures, manipulates, handles the tape recorder when necessary, speaks lines out front in the "plot" numbers, and keeps up a steady flow of their mailing list

campaigns, plugging special notices to agents and showing spots over the country, Europe, Canada. Dave handles most of the important manipulation in the act, handles the staging, builds, models, costumes and together they routine each number. There wasn't time to ask if they flipped a coin to see who fixed the flats on the station wagon, en route.

The Ritts

**Robert Fuller,
Director WCBS-TV Publicity**

The Ritts Puppets, who of late have become thrice weekly, Monday-Wednesday-Friday performers on WCBS-TV's "The George Skinner Show," are highly philosophic creatures. Paul and Mary Ritts, who manipulate their puppets, all animals, from behind a realistic-looking Central Park facade, both feel that the stories they and their puppets tell should represent a philosophy of life. As Paul says, the stories should tell people something "because people will take it from animals when they won't from human beings."

As evidence of this, Paul relates an experience that followed their appearance on Ed Sullivan's "Toast of the Town" on CBS Television a year ago Christmas. Their story that night emphasized that the Christmas spirit should be kept all year long, not just once every 52 weeks. Right after the show, they received a call from a couple in Michigan, who had seen the show. They wanted to thank the Ritts Puppets for the lesson they had learned. A few months before their little boy had died and with his death they felt the meaning of life had gone. Watching the show had renewed their faith in living and in humanity. "It was the kind of experience," says Paul, "that is so satisfying and certain-

ly helps us keep going."

Paul and Mary Ritts are actually handlers of puppets by chance. A few years ago, Paul, a graduate of the University of Michigan, was a director of television shows, and his wife did free-lance fashion art and played the organ for several radio stations. In one of his programs, Paul wanted to have a puppet and since there were no volunteers to manipulate it, he tried it himself. He found such a satisfaction in handling this puppet that he decided, then and there, to change careers. It was only after he had started that his wife entered the puppeteering scene. A woman was needed in one of his shows and Mary offered to do a walk-on part. She was so successful with Magnolia, the female ostrich with human wiles, that she became a permanent part of the act.

Mary and Paul have collaborated in the manufacture of their charges. Paul does the carving and Mary paints them and designs their clothes. Albert, the chipmunk, who is dressed in a green coat and has two protruding teeth was their first puppet. Then Paul added Sir Goeffrey, the giraffe; Calvin, the crow (who has the distinction of being a rod puppet); Magnolia,

(Continued on page 21)



PUPPET PARADE

(see photo section)

PRE-FEST PLANNERS

With Anne Thurman, Burr Tillstrom and Archie Elliott in charge, the planning of the 1956 Festival developed into almost a full fledged Festival. With reports flowing in from all quarters, it seems that some mighty efficient planning is underway and its high time you were making your plans to be on hand for the opening celebration. It's going to be bigger and better than ever! Don't miss it! Read all about their plans in this issue. More to come in each Journal. We hope to get the August Journal to you early, so you will have the last minute news before you start for the Fest.

FRANK PARIS

When last heard of Frank Paris and Ted Lewis, his assistant, were packing for a 20 day cruise in the Caribbean. Lucky devils! And a paid vacation at that. Judging from the schedule they have been following the last season it should be a most welcome rest. Frank writes that he is finally recuperating from the last operation on his leg, and hopes he will need no further operation.

Here is a partial listing of Frank's recent activities, acquired by Milton Halpert under the pressure that only Milton can exert. In addition to building puppets for other operators, including Sid Kroft and Vic Charles, Frank was able to help Lou Bunin with a kinescope, made five portrait puppets for the Jack Paar Show on CBS, supervised the conversion of life size manikans to marionettes for the Abraham and Straus Department Store

in Brooklyn, produced and directed same with help of four other puppeteers, did two shows for Paula Stone's "Toy Shop" on ABC, and appeared on CBS's "Morning Show," his first appearance with his nightclub puppets since his accident.

In addition, he appeared with the Rochester Symphony, played at Columbia University, did a number of benefit performances, and is scheduled to teach a class in puppetry at N.Y.U. In his spare(?)time, mostly while laid up last summer, he has turned his efforts to playwriting, nothing to do with puppets. . . hopes to complete it (the play) by 1984.

THE RITTS

Paul and Mary Ritts are engrossed in manipulating thier family of puppets which include Sir Goeffrey, a giraffe, Magnolia, an ostrich, and Albert, the chipmunk. The Ritts Puppets are seen Mon.-Wed.-Fri.- on WCBS-TV's "The George Skinner Show," (WCBS-TV Channel 2, 8:55-9:55 AM). Puppets shown here are Sir Geoffry, the giraffe, and Albert, the chipmunk.

See article "The Ritts" by Robert Fuller in this issue.

TROTTER BROS.

We asked in a recent issue if any one knew "The Trotter Brothers," then playing in Canada. Answers came from all directions. Our ever faithful "talent searcher," Herb Scheffel cornered them in New York for an interview and picture. In this issue, he gives us the answer to our question under the title, "A Team of Trotters."





PRE-FEST PLANNERS



FRANK PARIS





THE TT

ETTS





TROTTER BROS.



DIE HOHNSTEINER





by

DAVID ORCUTT



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DIE HOHNSTEINER

Hans Wacker writes elsewhere in this issue of *Die Hohnsteiner*, Germany's most outstanding puppet group. Enclosed with his article were these delightful pictures. Kasper is easily recognizable, the others are typical characters of that theater. We can't help admire the artistic simplicity of the carving. . . the direct rendering which gives strength and character to the figures. Would that more of our puppeteers could realize that simplicity is the key to a strong character.

DAVID ORCUTT

David Orcutt writes: "I am enclosing prints of a few of the puppets from our present series, *"Alice Through The Looking Glass."* At the top is the White King. In the lower left is the White Queen and in the lower right is the Red Queen and one of the Red Pawns.

"The eyes of these puppets are made of buck shot and roll about in a transparent plastic container. The lips of the White King and Queen are made of shoelace and string and are animated with an attached rod. The Red Queen also moves her mouth. For the most part I make my puppets out of acetate plastic and use numerous stops which are also made out of acetate and are

fastened with acetone. The puppets are from about four to ten inches although occasionally we use much larger or smaller puppets.

"I usually use from four to six rods to animate each puppet. The rods are 21 inches long and consist of a strong flexible wire which is inserted into a six inch piece of dowelling. Each rod is tipped with a piece of lucite or plexiglass rod into which has been drilled a horizontal hole. The rods are attached to the puppets so that a slight twist of the rod will turn that particular part of the puppet. The rods can also be laid flat to the puppet for packing. Unlike the Chinese type of shadow puppet, which can be turned, my puppets can face in only one direction. I therefore frequently have to make two versions of the same puppet—one facing left and one facing right. Despite the inconvenience of the extra work required I find that this is well compensated for by the fact that I can manipulate much better with this system than I could with the other.

"*"Alice Through the Looking Glass"* is a 13-week series which is carried by the C.B.C. network in Canada. Our *"Timothy T"* show ran for about 58 weeks before it was given a rest. After *"Alice"* I have hopes of doing another series utilizing an entirely new two dimensional technique."

THE RITTS

(Continued from page 11)

the ostrich with a wonderful Southern accent and magnificent plumage (the secret of which the Ritt's aren't revealing); Mr. Pennywhistle, the bird, and Shanel (No. 5, of course) who is the youngest of a skunk family of five.

The Ritt's use a backdrop of Central Park on each show because Paul, who writes the stories, feels that plausibility is heightened when he begins with reality and then goes into fantasy. "Something like *'Alice in Wonder-*

land,'" he says. "In *Alice's* case, the story begins with a little girl who is doing her lessons under a big shady tree. Her adventures begin only after she has fallen asleep, but you believe in her because you have seen her in a real situation."

To make sure each script will be well received, Mary and Paul rehearse them before their son Mark, nine-years-old. "When we keep his attention," says Paul, "we know we have something."

Evanston Pre-Fest

Romain Proctor

Something new, vital, inspiring has been added to American Puppetry. Saturday, January 14, 1956 in Fisk Hall, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois the first PRE-FESTIVAL was convened. Several "firsts" were inaugurated: the cooperation of many diverse groups and individuals, a dress rehearsal of a national festival and a meeting of the Festival Committee with the P of A Council.

At 9:30 Kay Richardson, Pre-Fest chairman, called the meeting to order. Anne Thurman described the P of A and the 1956 Festival; its organization, facilities and program. Robert Sneiderman, Northwestern's representative, told us what the University offered in housing, food, auditoriums, meeting and exhibition rooms, recreation facilities etc. Then each delegate was asked to introduce himself, tell of his work with puppets, what he would like to see at the Festival and what he could contribute. These people were enthusiastic. They had come from surrounding states as well as the huge Chicago metropolitan area. In addition to amateur and professional puppeteers there were Ad. Promotion Executives, Art Supervisors, Boy and Girl Scout Leaders, Church Workers, Curriculum Directors, Dramatics Teachers, Librarians, a Psychologist, Public Relations People, Settlement House Workers and Television Personnel. This heterogeneous group, with its varied interest in puppetry, should bring many new ideas to the 1956 Festival.

Kay then introduced a typical Festival program, complete with exhibits, shows and lunch. David Elliott flew in from Tennessee to be stage manager. Hans Schmidt did a clever hand puppet show on his

frame that hangs from his neck; a Japanese street stage (this is a draped large straw hat with a curtain-like veil not only masked Hans, but also was a background for the puppets.) Louise and Kent More, professionals, using hand and rod puppets, did their Aquarama Show. The Junior League of Evanston - Caroline Whipple and Carolyn Fargo manipulating - performed a charming hand puppet circus. The delegates had lunch at Scott Hall, where we ate and talked puppetry in the approved Fest fashion. In the afternoon session Bill Pullinsi did a variety show on an original stage which, among other features, had a curved traveller curtain so that three sides of the stage were visible. Marion Fisher and Harriett Nelson did an intimate hand puppet show of The Three Bears. Meno Spann, of the N.U. German Department and a well known puppeteer, showed us two scenes from Doctor Faustus, with handsome rod puppets, interesting properties and scenic effects. The inimitable George Merten demonstrated three marionettes and two new hand puppets. Pat Percy performed with a large colorful clown marionette. Burr Tillstrom did a beautiful impromptu performance (if the results of years of perfection can be called impromptu!) of course there were Kukla, Ollie, Beulah and Madam Oglepus and of course they did a sparkling, topical show. Burr's fans were not only the assembled, Pre-Fest people; but also Joe Lockwood, Beulah Zachary, Burr's now-retired-high-school-teacher Melita Skillen and Tony Sarg's sister Mrs. Pollak. Two elementary school boys, Jimmy Johnson and Mark Zweigler concluded the program with their version of The Frog Prince. The out-of-town delegates

were taken on a tour of the University and shown the facilities to be used in August.

Then started the second phase of the Pre-Fest: the joint meeting of the Festival Committee and the P of A Council. This meeting ran into the wee small hours of Sunday morning, was recessed for the night, reconvened with a brunch Sunday morning and continued until 8:30 P. M. The Council was represented by Archie Elliott, Ellen Proctor, Bruce Bucknell, George Merten and Romain Proctor (who was appointed to fill the vacancy caused by Alan Gilmore's resignation.)

Ann Thurman, Festival Chairman, assisted by Mary Olson, Robert Sneiderman, Burr Tillstrom and Jean Wiksell, has done a magnificent job of organizing; she set up committees to handle every facet of the Festival. Space is too limited to list all the committees, sub-committees and to tell what has been accomplished to date. An example will give you an idea of the organization and activity that is taking place under Promotion and Publicity, subcommittees have been set up - usually composed of people working in these fields - who will send letters and, when possible, personally contact every school, church, recreation center, scout group, settlement

house, "Y" and boys club in the area. One sub-committee is working on window displays in large stores. Other groups are preparing copy and arranging for presentation of radio, T. V. and in Chicago's many publications. This is a huge promotion, reaching millions of people not once, but many times, through different mediums. Best of all, the people who are doing this job are qualified, active people who have entree into schools, newspaper offices, T.V. stations etc.

In the business meeting each committee discussed its aims and problems with the Festival Committee and with the Council. Many suggestions and solutions were offered, many new ideas were presented.

If the Pre-Fest is a harbinger of the 1956 Festival then we can be sure of a full, happy, smooth running meeting. The Evanston Junior League is outstanding for its ability and enthusiasm. Anne Thurman is a "fire-ball" and is supported by equally capable and energetic committee members. A great deal has been accomplished at this early date. With the League's energy, talent, enthusiasm, and with almost six months in which to use them, we can be sure of one of the best possible Festivals.

Northwestern Prepares for Fest

Robert Schneideman
(Coordinator for Northwestern)

The shoreline of Lake Michigan in Evanston, Illinois is teeming with activity these days, as Northwestern University prepares to play host to the Puppeteers of America Festival, August 6 through 11 (Workshop, too!). The campus is a beauty—a mile or more of shaded lawns, garden walks, ivy-covered buildings—and the wide, wide wonderland of the Lake Michigan

beaches running the whole length of the campus itself. What's more: Chicago, with all its excitement and opportunities, is only minutes away by car, bus, or elevated train.

There will be a private dormitory, with a private cafeteria and hotel-service switchboard, just for the P. of A! Lots of exhibit space and conference rooms and lounges are right there

too—late evening meetings and Cabaret entertainment space is on hand as well—and the modern, beautifully spacious, air-conditioned theatre of Northwestern's famous Technological Institute is Puppet Hall for the run of the Festival!

All sorts of related activities of interest to puppeteers are at Northwestern to encourage you to come early and stay late. For instance, the School of Speech is offering a special course in Puppetry, fully accredited, for six weeks prior to the Festival: it will be taught by Kent and Louise More, whose excellent work in the field is known throughout the Midwest. And the University Theatre is also offering a student repertory company on a new outdoor stage for the month of July: they'll present a nightly rotation of four of the world's great plays. This year the plays are "The Beggar's Opera," Moliere's "Scapin," "Richard III," and "Our Town." You can go four nights in a row and see a different production each night!

Then, if you stay on after the Festival, you'll be able to spend some time at the Children's Theatre Institute and Conference which is also meeting at Northwestern University this year! (Northwestern just loves Festivals!) The Children's Theatre doings will follow the Puppeteers of America Festival by a week, so you may well like to plan to overlap the two meetings, and really get to know Northwestern!

All in all, it's a big summer ahead at beautiful old Northwestern: and the whole school and town is getting ready to make all the Festivals the very best yet! We think we have a wonderful place to have our friends visit. And we're going all out to do everything we can to make you comfortable while you're here. Please plan to come: Chicago, Evanston, the University, the beaches, the wonderful fun and fellowship of meeting in congenial atmosphere: all await you here in August at Northwestern. See you then!

The Saga of Elgard Thwump

Libby Solis

Now it came to pass in the early days of August in the year of the great Festival that a winsome youth name of Elgard Thwump shook the dust of Possum Walk, Tennessee from his heels and set forth for the campus of Northwestern University in the city of Evanston, Ill.

Elgard was one of nature's nobler creations (a puppeteer) but his soul contained a deadly flaw: he just plain never signed up for things on time.

Accordingly, when he arrived at Sargent Hall, Elgard dumped his paraphernalia behind a clump of potted flora, and ignoring the meaningful glance of the registrar at

the desk, breezed off for a quickie tour of the windy city.

It was a fatal gaffe; when Elgard returned to headquarters that night, the registration desk was deserted. Up above, lights shone from the rooms of the legions of the faithful. But Elgard was out in the heat.

In vain he beat upon the doors, scratched on the limestone, whimpered piteously for an entree. He was met first by silence, then by a barrage of empty hair tonic bottles and tattered copies of The Readers' Digest. Sensing he had been cruelly mistaken for a brace of caterwauling Toms, he fled to a deserted classroom in a nearby

building where he flung himself, panting, across the length of a hard table, and there fell into fitful slumber. He was awakened by a low buzz of voices, hours later. Imagine his horror to find a cluster of scholarly zoologists poised above his limp form, about to perform a tracheotomy! Wrenching his Xiphi humeralis free of their hungry grasp, he fled the startled scientists, dashed through the rear door of a second classroom and ducked behind a large screen.

How fortunate for Elgard that he was assailed at this juncture by an attack of hiccups; for nuclear fissionists stood on the other side of that screen, sledge hammers raised to split a particularly stubborn atom, and but for that timely act of nature, Elgard Thwump might have become an unwitting contribution to our atomic stockpile!

But the darkest hours were yet to come; after putting a half mile between himself and the physicists, Elgard dropped in the path of three lady speech majors, who, upon hearing his plight, diagnosed him a severe case of glottal shock, shoved a bone prop in his mouth, and dragged him bodily into a broom closet where he was held incommunicado for three whole days while made to recite "How now, brown cow".

Released on the night of August 10th with a pear-shape tone and a shattered psyche, Elgard made for the nearest dormitory, clawed his way up the wall and plunged through an open window.

Unhappy wretch! He had bumped into a housing unit for under-graduate females.

In the end it was all straightened out, of course; and a wiser Elgard Thwump was led gently to a government owned stonepile (the charge was breaking and entering) where for several seasons he will engage in the lackluster pursuit of translating the rocks of ages into do-it-yourself gravel.

Herewith endeth the text of our fable.

He that hath ears and a ballpoint, let him take heed!

NOTE

No need to point out the moral to this tale, but it seems that North-western is especially concerned about early registration, and preparations and accommodations will depend upon the number of registrants, so it is extremely necessary that they have your registration as soon as possible. Will you return the cards as soon as possible, please! Then every one will be happy and we will have a better Festival because you have helped.

Announcement

Included in this issue are your Festival registration cards, your card for room reservations, exhibit entries etc. Anne Thurman, chairman of the 1956 Fest emphasizes the fact that North-western is requiring early registration.

This will facilitate better planning for your convenience and comfort, and will enable them to assign adequate space for different activities of the Festival. Please comply with Anne's request and register early.

Festival! Festival! Festival!
August 6 through 11

Here and There

A new book on puppetry, "Dukke-teater," has appeared in Norway, the authors are Jane and Agnar Mykle. It may be ordered from Thgra Sjellangers Book Handel, 6005 8th Ave., Brooklyn 20.

Traditional Italian puppets still enact bloody and heroic stories of chivalry in the famous Mulberry Street of New York's famous Little Italy. The famous Manteo family of puppeteers carry on in their old Italian Puppet Theater, marionettes clashing in mortal combat, as puppeteers sweat profusely behind scenes as they manipulate the 100 pound marionettes. If you have missed this one, you have missed the only performance in America that still follows the traditional Italian theater.

In a small home workshop in Chicago, Frank Marshal, a quiet mannered man works amid a litter of heads, hands, wigs and other bits and pieces of a great family of ventriloquist dummies. He is the creator of Charlie McCarthy and many other wooden personalities that have found their way to fame.

Puppet Boxers Draw Blood

Frederick Guttman of Forest Hills, Queens, N. Y., has invented a pair of puppet boxers that can bloody each other's noses. The puppets are pulled over the hands like rubber mittens. The forefinger fits inside the head, and the thumb and middle finger provide the arms. In each boxing glove is a fountain of red ink that leaves a mark on the opponent puppet each time a blow strikes home. The ink is the kind that washes off easily.

The game is intended for two, but with a puppet on each hand the owner of a set can, of course, play solitaire.

Mr. Guttman came to the United States from Vienna in 1939, and got the germ of the puppet idea when he was a seasonal repairman for the F. A. O. Schwarz toy store in 1947.

Van Huesen (Sport Shirts) features a couple of clown marionettes dunking a washable, wrinkle resistant shirt in an old fashioned wash tub in a recent issue of *ESQUIRE*.

Milton Halpert sends us a collection of the finest cards we have seen, featuring historic reproductions in color. They may be ordered from Evelyn Curro, 207 W 18th St., N. Y. Only 10¢ each. . . . she has a collection of about 50 varieties, according to Milton . . . we received "Puppet Theater, 1870," "Wooden Toys," "Animal Caravan," "Mechanical Iron Banks," and "Old Dolls," all beautiful. You will be delighted with "Puppet Theater 1870."

As part of its overall political "convention package" this year, ABC-TV is throwing in a kid slanted program as a bonus to prospective clients. This will be a "Kukla, Fran and Ollie" muppet view of the two conventions with Burr Tillstrom originating the show from both the Chi and Frisco scenes.

Herb Scheffel caught the late Richard Teschner's puppets on film this last winter, reports that it was a thrill to see these delicate works of art at last, even though they were on film. The big circle proscenium with the Zodiac signs circling it was shown. . . it was once reproduced in one of the McPharlin Yearbooks.

Dorcas Williams, new P of A member rated a double page article in *PRACTICAL HOME ECONOMICS* on her recent project with a seventh grade home economics class. Inspired by a county workshop on puppet making, Mrs. Williams carried her project to such a successful completion that she was invited to take the entire show to the State Teachers' association at Charleston, W. Virginia. Mrs. Williams says, "I believe that our activity provided experiences that

books alone could not achieve." A most attractive cover design of a clown puppet in full color was used on the magazine to emphasize the importance of the article.

Ruthanna Russell, editor, comments, "A cast of characters such as Mrs. Williams, which represent a family group, can be used to enact family relationship problems. By talking through the puppet characters, students can express feelings and describe situations which they would hesitate to bring up in class. After the play, the class is set for a less personal discussion of family relationship problems."

The Omaha World Telegrams gives a feature story to Dean Short, senior in speech and dramatics at Omaha University. He and his wife Ruth have just completed a new show, "Rumplestiltskin" which they are showing to handicapped children. Dean started working puppets at the age of nine as a hobby and according to Dean "the hobby just grew." His versatile music talents, he gives lessons on the steel guitar, Spanish guitar, piano and organ, have added to his puppet production as has his ability as a ventriloquist.

The Junior League of Detroit was scheduled to present the prize winning play by David Waldron, "The Bear Who Played The Bijou" during Easter vacation at the Detroit Puppet Theater. The production was under the supervision of George Latshaw.

A book called "COLLECTORS ITEMS FROM THE SATURDAY BOOK," by Olive Cook and Edwin Smith, (McMillan, 1955) has two references to puppets, "Punch and Judy on the Sands of Waymouth, England" and "A Burmese Puppet."

Erma White tells us of a new Junior member, Bobbette Lowe, 11 years old who has made 25 marionettes, and who has taken part in all the Dilly Dolly trailer shows in Topeka. We wish we had a picture of this wonderful

Marionette Show Wagon, we received only a newspaper clipping. Sponsored by the recreation Department and directed by Erma, the Wagon performs daily in the many recreation centers and parks throughout the city. Florence Legg assists Erma in the productions as well as in the workshops which are open to the public. Winter meetings are held in the Craft Center at Gage Park.

CINERAMA HOLIDAY, according to Herb Scheffel, shows a wonderful five minute episode in the Guignol Theater in the Luxembourg Gardens, "Red Riding Hood" in capsule form. . . shows in addition audience reaction and back stage shots. . . no captions, however to tell who is performing.

Good news for those far from N. Y. City . . . rumor has it that the Bairds are being booked for out of the city tours.

The "Reluctant Dragon" by Kenneth Grahame was produced by the Hudson Park Branch of the New York Public Library to celebrate their 50th anniversary.

The 37th National Recreation Congress featured, among other activities, a session on Puppetry.

The puppetry demonstration was outstanding and attracted a large audience. Put on by the Denver Puppetry Guild, which had erected two puppet theatres, the program was introduced by Mrs. Lois Hurt, president of the guild, with the assistance of her daughter and of "Mrs. Zilchgardner" — a humorous gourd puppet created by Mrs. Mary Pauline Steele. It included a display of various types of puppets and marionettes, covered the use of shadow puppets, hand puppets, marionettes, and the making of them. Several brief shows were presented, as well as a special hand-puppet performance illustrating traffic safety rules, by the Denver Police Department. Among the exhibits were puppets made by Denver school children and scenes from slides and

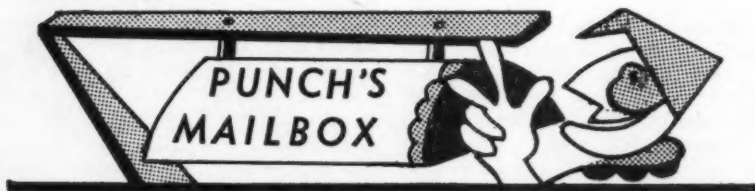
by the Century Marionette Guild with motion pictures of the operas created the assistance of young people of high-school and college age.

Audrey and Walter Fitzsimons, members of the Denver Guild, demonstrated color shadow puppets in connection with the puppetry workshop. . . which was a featured part of the Congress.

RECREATION, the national recreation Magazine, gave a nice review with attractive pictures.

Speaking of pictures, here is your

editors' gripe! When you get a nice spread in a local paper or magazine, with outstanding pictures, why don't you get copies and send them to the JOURNAL? We can't reproduce newspaper clippings but we can use originals. Most newspapers will make you a copy 8 by 10 for a buck if you get them right away. Some charge more but all in all they are not expensive and you have no initial cost of photography. It is surely worth that small amount to get your pic in the JOURNAL.



Rod Young—Punch's Mailbox, Box 14, University of Richmond, Virginia

"Let's sing a song of spring! Punch merrily hauled off and smacked Judy over the head with his gaily colored stick. Judy, as should all good wives in similar circumstances, slid silently from view as Punch ran about his stage scattering apple blossoms and singing a raucous song of ecstatic delight.

Apples are not the only blossoming items in view. Herb Scheffel has an exciting one man exhibition of water colors and theatrical drawings opening at Rockport Art Association, Rockport, Mass., on Sunday, April 29, and all puppeteers in the vicinity are invited. The show runs three weeks through May 20th and is open every day from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.

At this point Judy appeared on the scene and unrolled a long scroll itemizing various bits of puppet news. Punch always the perfect scoundrel, thanked her with a thud, pushed her

limp form aside and grabbed the scroll which he proceeded to read in loud, sonorous tones. As sonorous as a Punch-reed would allow him to be, that is. This is what he read.

Walton and O'Rourke were at the Muelbach Hotel, Kansas City, for two weeks in January. They were visited various times by a host of puppet enthusiasts including the Kelly family from Topeka, Happi and Roslyn Brune, The Hathaways, Pat Blackwood and Marge Hamilton. Marge and Pat Kelly were booked for the Fair Secretaries Convention show at Lincoln, Nebraska, January 24th. This is only one of the many shows and engagements the kinetic Kelly family is concerned with. They are the liveliest people! During February Marge raced off to Williamsburg, Va., to work with puppetry as a therapeutic device and was near our Richmond domain enough for us to drive down Sunday, haul her back and

show her behind our personal puppet scene. Caroline Lutz, who can exhibit one of the best collection of world puppets in her private museum at the University, entertained us for dinner and, although we occasionally reach the point where we feel as though we are prolific in puppetry, Margie and her working men made us feel lazy! Correspondence since her return convinces us all the more that the Kelly brigade is about the most active family puppet concern in America.

Low Parsons and his mother were booked solid during January and February in Texas schools. Andre Vern, better known perhaps as Bob Longfield, is active again in the Minneapolis area and going to town with those dancing cows. Wanda and Armand with their musical puppets appeared at the Palace Theatre, New York City, the week of January 5th.

The "Sneaky News" Department let's us know that rumored plans of the L. A. Turnabout Theatre to make a move in Northern directions is true. Also, that Dorothy and Frank Hayward of Oakland are the proud parents of a baby boy is true. Ralph Chesse, San Francisco puppet master, was seen recently on a KPIX children's show acting as judge and critic of an art contest. His television show "Brother Buzz" is now in its fourth year on KPIX.

Local puppeteers including Barbara and Jack Mee, Pat Lavin, Lorraine and John Craft and Lettie Connell went to see the toy theatre performance at John Bray and Hugh Evans' Lilliput Theatre in San Francisco. They enjoyed the spectacular lighting and scenic effects, got more than one laugh from the British humor and the style of British pantomime, admired the excellent tape recorded sound and the charming decor of the theatre which seats 49 people, they drank a nice cup of tea during intermission, but none of them were convinced that they should give up what they call their

"real" puppets for the two dimensional figures. These are based on the puppets so vividly described in the Robert Louis Stevenson essay "Penny Plain and Twopence Colored."

Other news from the San Francisco and Bay Area reveals that Wolo has been performing with his mouse puppet, Aloysius, on "This Morning Show" on KPIX and also on the Del Courtney show, same station. The Hayward Marionettes of Oakland are in rehearsal for "Hansel and Gretel." SUNSET MAGAZINE for December had a good article on how to do a shadow puppet show. Using a ventriloquist dummy and a hand puppet, Bruce Sedly appeared on Art Finley's "Tooney Town Show" over KOVR-TV.

Ralph Chesse, Dion Chesse, Grace Wilder, Stan Alsop, Tobias Casey and Lettie Connell have reported enjoying the pantomime skills of Marcel Marceau when he appeared in San Francisco in February. We wonder who has been doing the TV commercials for Drano with a pair of hand-puppets. Kukla, Fran and Ollie have also been busy doing commercials, we hear. Also, we wonder who the puppeteer is on the Ernie Kovacs Show. We do know that it was Bil and Cora Baird and company on the Martha Raye Show on Jan. 24th and who took part on the spectacular "Panorama" starring Imogene Coca on Feb. 26th. The Bairds Marionette Theatre series at the Phoenix Theatre, New York City, received swell publicity and their photographs keep popping up in the NEW YORK TIMES every few months.

Roberta Mack produced an interesting shadow version of the Nativity story for Christmas and was host to local puppeteers from the Bay Area, California. Ralph Chesse is very busy doing research and building marionettes of animals from Australia and New Zealand for his "Brother Buzz" show on KPIX. Jimmy Shaw and his marionettes were billed during Febru-

ary at the Purple Onion, a Bohemian basement bistro in San Francisco. The fourth annual Oakland Doll Show was held on February 18th with the Recreation Department's Vagabond Puppet Trailer, consisting of Lettie Connell assisted by Darryl Ferreira, featuring singing dogs in one of two shows given.

Lettie Connell joins Dottie Rankin in warning others to be very careful while using celastic and acetone as well as any other chemical mixtures that we find useful in puppetry. It is very important to always understand directions for use and not only to understand them, but to follow them. The results from not doing so might be very dangerous and become quite serious.

Lea and Gia Wallace took off on a January cruise after a good holiday season in New York City. Mary and Joe Owens are established in their new home and taking life easy for awhile. Joe is turning out interesting ceramic jewelry these days, we understand. Up in Rochester, New York, the Rushforths are full of enthusiasm after their first puppet Festival and have rebuilt and recostumed all their hand puppets in grand style.

Mary and Tony Williams were active with their Christmas Seal puppets during December. Tony, as well as performing on the electric guitar, took over an entire marionette and Punch show one date during the heavy Christmas season.

The Bruce Bucknell home is as busy as ever with a completely refurbished show and their heaviest seasons ever.

John S. Sisson has something to shout about! In and around Quincy, Mass., he had a startling Christmas season wherein he played to forty audiences in a two week period and in one day seven shows were given, each in a different place. A clipping from a recent Pittsburg paper headlines that puppet shows have attained their peak of development in Sicily. In the

article written by Leland Hazard, a business executive observing European cultures, it goes on to tell of the traditional Sicilian shows, attended for the most part by the older male populace, presented with three quarters life size puppets. Mr. Hazard discovered the seriousness with which puppet theatre is taken in the European and Asiatic countries when he said, "... it is a privilege to find something so real, with such uncompromised vitality, as the Sicilian marionette stage."

The Christmas season report isn't over. Here are some late items. Ralph Chesse's marionettes presented an exquisite performance of The Emporor's Nightingale at the Cellar Stage, 1470 Washington St., San Francisco. As enthusiastic as the audience, puppeteers were Patricia Lavin, Stan Alsop, Toby Casey, Dion Chesse and Lettie Connell. Ralph directed and played narrator in Chinese costume out front. Around the same time the String Theatre, a group headed by Barbara Mee, gave two performances of "The Night Before Christmas." Mrs. Mee is with San Francisco State College and directs interesting puppet work that is done by a group that met while folk dancing. One avocation that developed out of another!

The Kungsholm Opera Theatre puppets were discussed and viewed when the "You Asked For It" television show was asked for it on February 12th. That's in Chicago, of course, and anyone not familiar with the theatre should not miss the experience of investigating the Restaurant-Theatre and its miniature opera.

The Karre sisters of York, Nebraska, are as busy as ever with their puppets and marionette shows which they have been presenting for many years. At the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, Marjorie Shanafelt is actively teaching her puppet class and enjoying her Puppeteria as well as all her duties at the University Museum. The Uni-

versity offered a telecourse in which Marjorie participated before Christmas. In the Pittsburg school system, Miss Ida Mae Stilley illustrates the importance of dental hygiene with her friend Happy as she gives talks at assemblies. During Dental Health Week, Feb. 6th to 11th, she was visiting several large cities including Richmond, Va., where her picture appeared with an interesting article about her promotion of dental health with her puppet friend, a small puppy, a puppet.

Does anyone know about the Padre Puppeteers in Spring Valley near San Diego? In that city on Jan. 26, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Kelley presented their "Alladin" show at the Bird Rock School. It sounds a little too fantastic to be true, but a news clipping from San Dimas, California, states that Daniel Llords, while producing his original show, the "Folies Bergere," manipulates 202 puppets while at the same time he supplies the voices in French, German, Italian and Spanish for the actors. Whew! We thought it was something to manipulate seven or eight and speak in English!

In Manhattan, Kansas, for the Kiwanis Christmas Dinner meeting, Elaine-Miller and her husband, Jordan, a professor of English at Kansas State College, presented their Peppermint Players to a delighted group. Jumping over to Wichita we hear that Betty and Sandy Root are as busy as puppeteers with all their bookings while Terry is enrolled in electrical engineering at the University there. Terry also is a TV cameraman at night and we understand that he engineers some pretty terrific handpuppets to boot. Danny Hathaway of Topeka has a snake puppet that is worked by rods, strings and his hand. While it sings "Whatever Lola Wants" it wraps itself around Danny boa style.

Under the name "Hollywood Marionettes" Jim Menke and his partner are touring Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa,

Missouri, Oklahoma and Arkansas with their version of "Hansel and Gretel." While on tour they have been able to visit lots of puppeteers and, for one thing, reported that Pat Blackwood of Kansas City landed a window job at Macy's. He worked with his partner, Marge Hamilton, plus Marge's daughter and Erma White, from Topeka, and alternately they did shows which utilized hand puppets, finger puppets and marionettes.

Addis Williams learned quite a lot while working with the Suzari Marionettes last summer and returned to his Sheveport, La., home with enthusiasm to create original work with his own puppets. He has been doing TV shows quite frequently with his original and sometimes slightly "nutty" variety acts. Skipping back across the country to California, Griffith Jones and his puppets brought excitement and fun to crowds at Barker Brothers Auditorium during the Christmas season.

If you are interested in a good puppet course then investigate the Northwestern Summer School class to be taught by Kent and Louise More, active puppeteers and both Northwestern graduates in Drama. They have a wealth of experience in professional puppetry and will teach the summer classes which will culminate with our Festival in August. Mrs. Margaret West, of Evanston H. S., is a Special Services Art Director who uses puppets in Religious drama in her church and is an active promoter of P. of A. as we all should be. She is in the process of photographing many of the old Tony Sarg items in the collection of Mrs. Charlotte Delak, Tony's sister, living in Chicago. We all may be able to see these pictures if we all come to the Festival. Let's!

In Richmond, Va., Rod Young keeps happily busy teaching puppetry at the University where classes were working towards an April production date for a colored shadow version of David and Goliath for a Vesper Service. Personal

shows included "A Mouse in the House," "Hooray for the Circus," and for the Westhampton College Alumnae, "Rainbow Fever," presented on April 5th and 6th. Shows are done at local schools. During January and February puppets were on display at the Public Library and received good mention in local papers. The University Alumni Bulletin Spring Issue featured an article by Rod Young and a happy puppet cover. Rod also keeps active in "live" theatre and directed the Art Student's Variety Revue at the Richmond Professional Institute the end of February and played Touchstone in a Shakespearean production of "As You Like It" given at the Virginia Arts Festival on April 11th.

Three hundred guests were invited to the March meeting of the Detroit Puppet Guild who, with their 175 members, is the liveliest Guild in the U. S. A. Roberto Lago and his puppeteers, the El Nahual Puppeteers of Mexico were guests of the Guild and the Detroit Puppet Theatre at the Institute of Arts on March 3rd. In February they all gathered for a slide lecture, an interpretation "Royal Marionettes to Vaudeville Variety," by Dus Cavallo. Late in December, Cedric and Lee Head presented the Deaves Meader Marionettes from the Institute's permanent collection in the show which was originally touring in the early twentieth century.

Happy Leap Year to you all from Punch who would appreciate it very much if you would take the hint and leap into action not only in creative puppet endeavor but also in letter writing endeavor. Please send your news to us quickly and quietly. Until we hear from you we will remain hopeful and after we hear from you we will remain thankful. Even if you can't write good letters, make believe you can and that will do beautifully. We believe in make believe.

We had an interesting report from London puppeteer Murray Clark who

is interested in correspondence with American puppet fans around the age of 18. His address is 85 Princes Ave., Gunnersury Park, London, W.3, England. Murray works with top television puppets and in the caberet field. He has appeared at the Cafe Royal among other large clubs and hotels that have caught on to the idea of booking marionette caberet for their dances. We understand that Paul and Peta Page are touring the English theatres with their 3 foot puppets. They played the Palladium twice with the Bob Hope Show and were currently touring South Africa with the Johnny Ray Show.

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